

REMARKS

Claims 1-6, 12, 18 and 19 were acted upon in the aforesaid Office Action. No claims have been canceled and no new claims have been added, leaving claims 1-6, 12, 18 and 19 for further consideration.

All claims stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as anticipated by Mahmoodie DE29618925.

Claim 1 has been amended to be limited to a shaped sheet of material adapted to be affixed to an annulus of a cardiac valve. The sheet is configured to match and overlies at least a portion of a first cardiac valve leaflet, and is adapted to be contacted by a portion of a second valve leaflet, to facilitate closing of the valve.

Mahmoodie's device includes two shaped brackets with struts extending therebetween. Neither bracket is adapted to be contacted by an opposing leaflet.

Accordingly, it appears that claim 1, as amended, is not anticipated by Mahmoodie. It would further appear that claim 1 is not rendered obvious by Mahmoodie which is, in essence, a clamp having two brackets interconnected by struts which can be crimped to bring the brackets closer together to squeeze two leaflets together. The device defined by claim 1 acts to support one leaflet so that it can be naturally engaged by a second leaflet.

The Mahmoodie device thus squeezes the two leaflets toward each other. It therefore appears that Mahmoodie does not teach or suggest the device recited in Applicant's claim 1. It is believed that claim 1 distinguished over Mahmoodie and would be deemed allowable thereover.

Claims 2-6, 12 and 19 depend directly or ultimately from claim 1 and would appear to be allowable, at least through dependency.

In addition, claim 2 adds to the matter of claim 1 that the shield, i.e., the shaped sheet of material, is adapted to prevent prolapse of the first leaflet (the leaflet to which the shield is affixed). It looks as though the brackets of Mahmoodie would not serve to prevent prolapse of the leaflets to which they are mounted.

Claim 4 adds to the matters of claims 1 and 2 that the shield includes an opening therein, a feature not seen in a bracket of Mahmoodie.

Similarly to claim 1, claim 18 sets forth, in method terms, "providing a shield comprising a shaped sheet...having a configuration to match and overlies...the first leaflet...and adapted to be contacted by the second leaflet...", a feature absent from Mahmoodie.

In addition, with respect to claims 1 and 18, it appears at least doubtful that either bracket of Mahmoodie would constitute a valve shield having a configuration to match and overlies a

leaflet. It appears that the brackets squeeze the mitral annulus, to thereby urge the leaflets toward each other. It doesn't look as though the brackets are configured to overlies the leaflets.

It also appears to be at least questionable whether the brackets of Mahmoodie exhibit a surface area configured to overlies a leaflet. The brackets appear to be configured to engage the annulus in a complementary fashion, but not to have a surface area configured to match and overlies a leaflet, or portion thereof.

Accordingly, it appears that claims 1-6, 12, 18 and 19 stand clear of Mahmoodie and allowance thereof is most respectfully requested.

In the event that any additional fees may be required to be paid in connection with this submission, please charge the same, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 16-0221.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott R. Foster". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Scott" being more prominent.

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AMENDMENT TO THE DRAWINGS

A replacement sheet for FIGS. 8-10 is submitted herewith.

On page 8, last paragraph, continuing onto page 9, it is said "in FIG 10, there is shown a mitral shield 405 combining a solid shield portion and perforations 410 and integral staples 425...".

Reference character 425 was not present in FIG. 10, but has been added to the FIG. 10 herewith.